

structures to be coated in order to prevent coating of the support structure. Applicants respectfully disagree. It would not have been obvious to provide the shorter nozzle assembly, as recited in independent claim 16.

JP '727 discloses an assembly to uniformly coat a structure by applying the coating across the length of the structure and relying on the smoothing plate to maintain the uniform depth of the coating. Please see paragraph [0006] of JP '727. Thus, it is clear that no motivation was provided to shorten the length of the nozzle to, for example, prevent coating material from flowing down the length of the nozzle to the base of the structure, the flowing coating material not allowing for a uniformed depth of the coating, as recited in the present application. Please see at least, page 2, line 21 through page 3, line 6 and page 9, line 24 through page 10, line 3. It, therefore, would not have been obvious to shorten the nozzle of JP '727 to achieve all of the features of the present application.

Claims 16-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP '727 in view of Shibata et al. (U.S. 5,435,847) (Shibata). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Shibata discloses a nozzle length less than the width of the web being coated. This shortened nozzle would leave an uncoated margin on both sides of the web. Shibata discloses that the purpose of the uncoated region is to prevent the coating material from spilling onto the rear side of the web during coating or if the web meanders. See column 1 lines 14-27. This is an issue not possible with the apparatus disclosed in JP '727. Thus, there would have been no motivation to have combined the apparatus of JP '727 with the nozzle of Shibata.

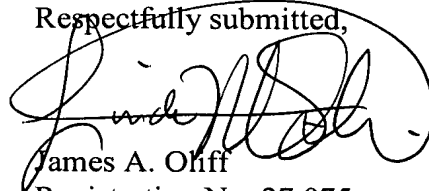
Further, if they could have been combined, the references would fail to disclose all of the features of the claims. Neither Shibata nor JP '727 disclose coating the entire surface of the pillar structure, leaving no uncoated regions on the surface being coated, as recited in independent claim 16. Thus, the nozzle of Shibata, even if somehow combined with the apparatus of JP '727, is ineffective in achieving all of the features of the present claims.

Claim 16 is patentable. Claims 17-30 are dependent on claim 16 and therefore are patentable for their dependence upon claim 16 in addition to the additional features they recite. Withdrawal of the rejections is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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